

## Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1955

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PROP, SREF, UR

SUBJECT: PROPAGANDIST'S DEFENSE OF SOVIET EMIGRATION POLICY  
AND INFORMATION CONTROLS

1. LENDING PUBLIC PROPAGANDIST LEV LEBEDEV STOUTLY DEFENDED SOVIET EMIGRATION POLICY AND INFORMATION CONTROLS DURING FEBRUARY 8 REMARKS AT CENTRAL LECTURE AUDITORIUM. TOPICS AROSE IN CONTEXT OF LEBEDEV'S CHARGE THAT IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE HAD INTENSIFIED IN RECENT MONTHS AND THAT BOURGEOIS IDEOLOGISTS ATTEMPTING TO WEAKEN SOCIALISM WITH DEMANDS FOR "LIBERALIZATION" OF SOVIET SOCIETY. AWARD OF NOBEL PRIZE TO SAKHAROV WAS CITED AS CONCRETE EXAMPLE OF SUCH DIVERSIONS.

2. LEBEDEV CLAIMED THAT SOVIET UNION HAS PRISTINE RECORD IN PERMITTING EMIGRATION. HE SAID THAT 98.4 O/O OF ALL APPLICANTS DURING PERIOD 1970-1975 WERE PERMITTED TO DEPART AND THAT 1.6 O/O REMAINDER REFUSED ONLY BECAUSE OF KNOWLEDGE OF MILITARY AND INDUSTRIAL SECRETS. LEBEDEV RECAPPED TOTAL NUMBER OF SOVIET EMIGRANTS RECEIVING PERMISSION WITH FIGURES GENERALLY CORRESPONDING TO SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRATION TOTALS FOR 1973, 1974, 1975; HOWEVER, HE DID NOT MENTION FACT THAT MOST EMIGRANTS WERE SOVIET JEWS. LEBEDEV CLAIMED THAT BETWEEN 1966-1974 THERE WERE NO RPT NO REFUSALS OF PERSONS APPLYING TO LEAVE SOVIET

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UNION BECAUSE OF MARRIAGE TO FOREIGNERS. HE CITED FIGURES OF

5,014 WOMEN AND 540 MEN WHO WERE PERMITTED TO LEAVE AND JOIN FOREIGN SPOUSES. LEBEDEV COMMENTED CAUSTICALLY ON CHARGES THAT THE SOVIET UNION USED MENTAL INSTITUTIONS TO DISCOURAGE EMIGRATION. HE MENTIONED THE NAMES OF PLYUSCH, ZUKERMAN, YAKOBSON, AND STRUVA AS EXAMPLES OF MENTALLY ILL PERSONS WHO WERE RECOGNIZED AS SUCH AFTER THEY MANAGED TO DEPART FOR THE WEST. HE SAID THAT AMERICAN IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS HAD REFUSED U.S. ENTRY TO SUCH PEOPLE BECAUSE OF THE PROVISION IN U.S. IMMIGRATION LAW BARRING VISAS FOR MENTALLY DISTURBED PERSONS.

3. COUNTERING CRITICS OF SOVIET OBSERVANCE OF CSCE, LEBEDEV SKETCHED USUAL PROPAGANDA LINE ON NUMBER OF FOREIGN AUTHORS PUBLISHED IN SOVO FOREIGN VQLDSJO SOVIET AUTHORS PUBLISHED ABROAD.

HE ALSO POINTED TO "RECENT RELAXATION" OF CONTROLS ON RESIDENT FOREIGN JOURNALISTS IN SOVIET UNION WHICH WOULD GIVE THEM WIDER ACCESS TO SOVIET SOURCES TO OBTAIN THEIR STORIES. HOWEVER, LEBEDEV SAID, THE JOURNALISTS "MUST USE THE INFORMATION THEY OBTAIN OBJECTIVELY, AND NOT TO DETRIMENT OF SOCIALISM."

4. LEBEDEV LATER WAFFLED COMPLETELY ON AUDIENCE QUERY AS TO WHY WESTERN NEWSPAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS WERE ESSENTIALLY UNAVAILABLE IN SOVIET UNION. LEBEDEV FIRST SAID THAT EXCHANGE OF PRINTED INFORMATION DEPENDED UPON BILATERAL AGREEMENTS WITH THE WESTERN COUNTRIES INVOLVED. NEVERTHELESS, HE ADDED, VERY FEW SOVIET NEWS KIOSKS WOULD NEED TO CARRY WESTERN PUBLICATIONS BECAUSE OF THE LANGUAGE BARRIER AND BECAUSE WESTERN PUBLICATIONS WERE QUITE EXPENSIVE AND MOST PEOPLE COULD NOT AFFORD THEM. ANOTHER QUESTION FROM THE AUDIENCE ASKED WHY "AMERIKA" MAGAZINE WAS NOT AVAILABLE IN LENINGRAD. LEBEDEV CONTENDED THAT IT WAS AVAILABLE, BUT SAID THAT THE AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S. PROVIDES "FOR ONLY A FEW COPIES."  
NEUBERT

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## Message Attributes

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